

WASATCH COUNTY (UTAH). COUNTY COMMISSION ^[1516]

MINUTES, 1862#[ongoing]

DESCRIPTION: These minute books record the actions of the county commission (known during the territorial period as the county court), the governing body of the county. The commission is authorized to manage all county business and county property. This includes budgeting, equipment purchasing, and auditing; use of county lands; districting for schools, roads, voting, etc.; taxing, specifically acting as an ex- officio board of equalization; business licensing; arranging for the construction of roads, public buildings, etc.; contracting for services; supervising the conduct and payment of all county personnel; providing for basic health care, public safety, and care of the indigent; canvassing election returns and appointing certain officials; and incorporating municipalities. All these activities are noted in the minutes with the day's entries prefaced by date and names of those present.

Following the formation of territorial government, the legislature in 1852 passed acts relating to the formation and government of counties. There were no county commissions, but the probate judge in conjunction with the county selectmen were invested "with the usual powers and jurisdiction of County Commissioners" and as such were known as the county court. The probate court clerk (also known as the county clerk) was to keep the records of the court. This structure was followed by Wasatch County upon its organization 22 February 1862. With statehood in 1896 an actual board of county commissioners was created. The probate judge was removed, but the selectmen continued serving as commissioners until elections were held. The county clerk remained the clerk of the board, recording the minutes. The previous responsibilities were maintained and expanded.

One of the principal activities noted in the minutes is the monitoring of the fiscal health of the county. Claims submitted for the purchase of supplies and services were listed in detail until the late 1920s when purchases were summarized or discussed in terms of budget appropriations. The board set the salaries for county employees. The county commission

assessed taxes and served as a board of equalization, adjusting assessments of individual property. Tax sales and redemptions are a major topic during the 1930s. The commissioners appointed and oversaw numerous county, district and precinct officials, and were generally responsible for the oversight of county agencies.

The commissioners created school districts and road districts. A major responsibility noted throughout the minutes is the layout of roads and bridges. The commissioners served as canvassers of elections, also appointing election officers, setting the boundaries of voting districts, and assigning polling places. They approved the incorporation of towns. They licenses businesses, beginning with liquor and butcher licenses in the 1860s and expanding to all businesses when so authorized in the 1880s. Commissioners provided for building public buildings such as a courthouse in 1879. They oversaw the resources of the county, initially allocating timber rights, water rights, herdgounds, and mill sites. In the early 20th century they oversaw the creation of water and irrigation districts. They also allowed bounties on varmints and appointed a fish and game warden, bee inspector, and noxious weed inspector.

The commission provided for the well-being of the county's citizens and recorded the details in these minutes. They financed the care of the incapacitated, indigent, and insane. They appointed a county physician, mandated quarantine regulations particularly during the 1918 influenza epidemic, and created a board of health. A welfare board was created in 1937. In 1951, the commission organized a civil defense council.

ARRANGEMENT: The minutes are arranged chronologically by date of meeting.

RESEARCH NOTE: Given the diversity and extent of the county commission's activities, the minute books should be consulted not only by researchers seeking information on the commission, but by those seeking information on any county agencies, their personnel, or their services to individuals; on private contractors and their plans for work on county projects or private subdivisions; on private businesses operating with the unincorporated county limits; and on private individuals or charitable institutions holding taxable or untaxable property within the county. Virtually any person living in, or any activity taking place in, unincorporated areas of Wasatch County (up to and including the incorporation of municipalities) was affected by the activities of the county commission and is reflected in the minutes.

RELATED RECORDS: While the minutes summarize the meetings of the commission, many other county agencies recorded the particulars. Thus the other holdings of the county commission and other Wasatch County agencies should be consulted.

PROCESSING NOTE: The Wasatch County Clerk as secretary for the Wasatch County Commission should be contacted for recent holdings. The first and third reels were filmed by the county in 1991; the second reel was filmed by the LDS Genealogical Society in 1966. The

paper copy was retained by the county. The series was processed by A.C. Cone in July 1996. Film 124401 was cut to preserve the chronological order of the series, creating reels 1 and 3.

GAPS IN THE SERIES: The volume covering the period from 1889 to 1899 is missing.

CONTAINER LIST

Reel	Description
1	1862, Feb 22#1889, Dec 2
2	1899, Feb 14#1911, Aug 12
3	1911, Sep 5#1919, Dec 1; 1920, Jan 5#1933, Dec 2; 1934, Jan 6#1954, Jul 6